

PART 121-2: THE VISION FOR FUTURE LAND USE

Rhode Island's image in 2025 will be a colorful mosaic. Its vibrant centers will radiate with activity in tones of red, orange, and yellow, against an earth-toned backdrop of resource conservancy – greens, blues, and browns.

Rhode Island of 2025 will be an organic, integrated, and successful region, nested within the larger orbit of Boston's regional sphere. The state's landscape will retain its identity and uniqueness. Distinctiveness, tradition, and compelling beauty will prevail as its hallmarks. Land use patterns and development design will distinguish its diverse communities and celebrate the authenticity of its special places.

Having contained sprawl, the state's urban form will be a pattern of concentrations. People and their endeavors will continue to be largely concentrated in traditional locations – along the shore-fronting communities and in major river valleys. Dense centers of varying scales, both traditional and new, will be the foci of housing, commerce, and social interaction.

Greater Providence – at the head of the Bay – will be the region's premier center, a vital and self-renewing core for people and culture. Other cities, town centers and villages will be centers for the state's major sub-regions or individual communities. Networks of efficient transport and services will connect and support the major centers. New, planned centers will emulate the essence of traditional communities at locations newly advantaged by regional transport hubs. All centers will exemplify quality design, and embody vibrancy, livability and sustainability.

Rhode Island in 2025 will also be green and blue. A thinly-settled, predominately forested band in the western third of the state will conserve essential resources, support resource-based economies, and, with adjoining conserved areas in eastern Connecticut, provide a green oasis for the Northeast's megalopolitan populations. Conserved farmland and forests will envelop centers, and the built environment infused with greenspace and greenways. The state's sapphire centerpiece, the Bay, will be healthy and productive. Where land meets water, the waterfront edge, will remain the state's trademark – a carefully tended tapestry of nature, utility, beauty and activity.

In 2025, Rhode Island will be a place where people and nature continue to exist in productive harmony. It will be a place where present and future generations may enjoy the blessings of the state's natural environment, engage the world through a productive economy, and retain a connection to their past while embracing a prosperous future. —The Land Use 2025 Vision

This can be the future for Rhode Island. It is the product of much discussion, deliberation, strategizing and note comparing among planners. The background and ways to enable it to happen are reviewed in the pages that follow.

2-1 Gauging Public Perceptions of Land Use Objectives

Much of *Land Use 2025* flows from the opinions of the general public, state leadership and planning professionals on land use trends, community values and growth priorities. Beginning in early 2000, gathering this information included several major efforts: a public opinion survey, a televised “Town Meeting,” and a series of regional meetings with local planning officials. Findings from each of these were reported in a series of technical papers. In 2003, interviews were conducted with several dozen Rhode Island planning practitioners.

Telephone Survey (2000)

In January 2000, Statewide Planning and two partners attempted a representative public opinion survey on growth issues. Over the course of five days, January 24-28, the Research Center in Business and Economics at the University of Rhode Island conducted a telephone survey of Rhode Island residents to determine their *growth priorities*, i.e., Rhode Islanders’ concerns about future growth in the state and the kinds of communities they valued. Of the 1,380 persons contacted, 452 usable responses were obtained, a response rate of 34 percent.

The survey sought input in three areas: growth concerns for the coming five years, important factors in choosing where to live, and land use priorities.

Findings were compiled in *Rhode Island Growth Priorities for 2000 and Beyond* (February 2000). ((Reference?)) Key findings, mirroring concerns for the next five years, were that:

- The greatest levels of concern were directed to protecting drinking water, cleaning Narragansett Bay, keeping taxes down, and improving the quality of life.
- Whether a respondent lived in Newport or Providence, was affluent or poor, or was old or young, *clean water* was of the highest concern.
- In order of priority, Rhode Islanders were most concerned with environmental issues, followed by economic growth, and then transportation. In fact, *environmental issues were considered twice as important as either economic growth or transportation.*

Regarding what was important in choosing where to live:

- The single most important factor was *good schools*. This was followed by public water and sewer, and a sense of neighborhood and community.

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- Significant differences were found among Rhode Islanders in what was important in choosing where to live:

Renters were more concerned with convenient transportation than were homeowners.

Women rated neighborhood schools, and a short commute to work, more highly than men did.

Those with more education were more concerned with being near a bus line while those with lower education were more concerned with good schools, a sense of neighborhood, and being able to walk to schools and shops.

Single respondents rated convenient transportation as more important than did those who were married.

Urban residents rated access to parks and recreation, good schools, and public transportation higher than rural residents. Urban residents also valued the ability to walk to shops, a short commute to work, and a sense of neighborhood highly. Rural residents rated having a large lot as more important.

Region of the state had a large impact on the priorities respondents placed on choosing where to live. Providence residents valued access to parks and recreation, public water and sewers, easy access to highways and buses, a short commute to work, and the ability to walk to schools and shops as more important than did respondents in other parts of the state.

Land use priorities were measured by a series of twelve questions. Responses ranged from “(1) strongly agree” to “(5) strongly disagree.” We found that Rhode Islanders:

- Subscribed heavily to the Yankee philosophy of reuse. The two items generating the highest agreement related to redevelopment and reuse of older cities and buildings.
- In general want to limit new development (but not too much) and protect open space (more than they want to limit development). They don’t think people should be able to build wherever they want, and disagree with the statement, “There is too much attention paid to protecting open space.”

On the important issue of priorities given costs, respondents said they were willing to pay the bill for their priorities. Four items in the questionnaire checked if respondents continued to agree when it was clear that this would require the use of tax dollars or could involve inconvenience. Respondents, however, seemed more willing to

bear financial costs through taxes than to bear personal costs such as increasing housing density.

The Best and the Worst

The questionnaire included four open-ended questions to determine what people thought were the best and worst things about their community and about Rhode Island in general.

When asked what they liked most about their community, people said they valued “quiet,” closely followed by community/neighborhood.

When asked what they liked least about their community, respondents most frequently cited roads and traffic. This was followed by overbuilding/too many people, taxes, and congestion.

When asked what they liked most about the state, beaches and the ocean topped the list, followed by scenery, size, and sense of community. People mentioned politics, taxes, roads, corruption, and schools when asked what they liked least about the state.

Televised Town Meeting (2000)

On February 28, 2000, Statewide Planning and eight partners and sponsors conducted a televised Town Meeting, *Growth Challenges for the New Millennium – Balancing the Options*. Carried live on Channel 10 and Cox Cable, this hour-long program brought together approximately 80 community leaders, agency representatives and citizens to begin a dialogue on significant growth concerns. Viewers were offered an opportunity to participate with questions and comments submitted by phone and e-mail links.

Regional Planner Workshops (2001)

Five regional workshops were held in July 2001 to engage community planning officials, including planning staff and planning board members, in discussions of major land use issues facing their communities. The workshops also solicited their ideas on future directions for state land use policy. What follows is a summary of the problems, issues, and policy recommendations that were raised at the workshops. They are presented in the order of frequency that occurred in the workshops.

Growth Management

The most frequently mentioned policy concerns were those related to *growth management*. This is an extremely broad issue, and comments ranged from specific local options and observations to suggestions for far-reaching state policy changes. Nearly one-third of all comments received were associated with growth management issues.

The two major problems respondents cited were that the rate of growth in many communities is more than they can accommodate, and that communities do not have sufficient capabilities, in general, to manage growth. Major issues included the present pattern of growth overburdening infrastructure such as schools and road capacity, and resulting in detrimental changes in community character.

The major policy recommendations they made were to:

- Redevelop, revitalize, and reuse urban areas. Promote infill development.
- Designate growth areas and priority investment areas.
- Provide communities with more authority and tools to control and shape development.
- Adopt a statewide program to provide municipalities more funding for open space, affordable housing, and historic preservation.

Local Capacity

The second most mentioned problem was *local capacity*. This reflected the frustration of local officials who feel there is a significant gap between land use planning in theory and reality, i.e., the ability of communities to implement what they know from theory to be the best land use practice. In their view, both project-specific development review and long-term planning require a greater level of knowledge, information, and resources than are available on the municipal level.

One-fourth of the comments related to issues involving local capacity. The major issues were:

- Workloads are overwhelming local officials. Communities are forced to react on a case-by-case basis rather than act proactively.
- Communities do not have adequate tools or technical expertise.
- Local boards and commissions generally lack training in planning and development principles, or in their legal powers and authority.

The major policy recommendations were to:

- Provide communities with more technical assistance.
- Provide local boards and commissions with more education and training.
- Provide communities with model ordinances, best practices, forecasting models, etc.
- Promote regional cooperation and information sharing.

Traffic/Transportation

The third most mentioned issue was *transportation and traffic*. There was widespread agreement that there should be improved efforts to link transportation and land use planning. Workshop participants said traffic congestion has been worsening, and cited this as the major problem. The major issues were:

- Land use is a local prerogative, but effective transportation planning and implementation requires a regional approach.
- There is a reinforcing synergy whereby new development requires improved or expanded roads, which allows for more development, which increases traffic and requires more improvements/expansion.

The major policy recommendations were to:

- Utilize corridor planning.
- Plan for areas of high-density development and mass transit in a unified fashion.
- Improve public and intermodal transportation systems.
- Better coordinate state transportation decisions and local land use decisions.

Regional Planning

Regional growth planning, open space, water supply and aesthetics tied for fourth in frequency of mention. Although in many respects a subset of growth management, there was enough emphasis on the need for a regional approach to warrant a separate category.

First, regional planning. The major problems were that development in one community can affect surrounding communities without the surrounding communities having any input, and that some issues can only be effectively addressed on a regional basis. Workshop participants recognized four major issues:

- Large-scale projects have regional impacts.
- Effective transportation planning requires consideration of a large geographic area.
- Water supply requires planning based on the service area, not municipal boundaries.
- Policies appropriate for one area of the state may not be suitable for other areas.

The major policy recommendations were to:

- Encourage and support regional planning efforts.

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- Plan transportation, water supply, and open space protection regionally (between and among municipalities) and statewide.
- Promote inter-municipal consistency in the local comprehensive plans. Cities and towns should sit down together as regions to do updates to their comprehensive plans.
- Develop state policies taking into consideration regional differences.

Open Space

Open space protection was mentioned both in terms of being a successful policy and in the need to do even more. The major problem identified in the workshop is that the demand for open space on the local level exceeds the current supply. The major issues were a lack of funding and the lack of success of development schemes designed to preserve open space (e.g., cluster development).

The major policy recommendations were to:

- Maintain or increase funding by the state, or by targeting the real estate transfer tax for open space.
- Provide technical assistance to assure that cluster development provides for meaningful open space. Additionally, communities need to consider new subdivision alternatives such as “conservation design.”
- Provide incentives for conservation corridors, greenways, or other priority areas.

Water Supply

Workshop participants agreed that *water supply* should be a priority in determining the placement and intensity of future development. Development is occurring on an incremental basis without sufficient attention, they said, to the long-term supply of drinking water. This was cited as the major problem confronting water supply; at issue were increasing numbers of people living in vulnerable water supply regions.

The major policy recommendations were to:

- Relate the level of allowable development to water supply.
- Provide more information to communities regarding the quantity and quality of water resources.
- Promote communication between towns and the Water Resources Board; encourage local familiarity with Water System Supply Management Plans.

Aesthetics

A surprisingly passionate issue, *aesthetics* and the broader issue of *community character* were mentioned as sources of ongoing frustration for many communities. There was widespread support for policies that would promote more attractive

development that would enhance each community's individual character. Unattractive and unimaginative development was seen as detracting from local character and the perceived quality of life. At issue were sprawl leading to a sameness in architecture and design, and new commercial development occurring in the same old unattractive designs.

The major policy recommendations were to:

- Give communities the authority/justification for establishing architectural design regulations.
- Give greater attention to policies for a "visually pleasing environment," such as recommending implementation strategies to municipalities (e.g., model ordinances, design review, tools to strengthen the ability to regulate design, amortization provision for signs, etc.).

Affordable Housing

The eighth topic that received multiple comments was *affordable housing*. It was always mentioned in terms of inadequate supply; supply was identified as the major problem. Major issues feeding the problem were that high-cost replacement housing was effectively removing smaller, affordable homes from the community housing stock, and that affordable housing was very difficult to achieve under current market conditions.

The major policy recommendations were that:

- Communities maintain the current number of affordable housing units. The best opportunities were by subsidizing existing structures.
- Municipalities need to reconcile their Comprehensive Plans' support for affordable housing with their zoning regulations.

Taxes

The ninth and final topic area was taxes. Participants agreed there was too much dependence on property taxes for local revenue. Issues arose from there being little or no alternative to the present system and from local land use decisions being based primarily on the effect they would have on property tax revenue. The major policy recommendation was to consider regional tax sharing.

Interviews with Planning Leaders (2003)

During the latter part of 2003, Statewide Planning staff conducted interviews with several dozen leaders in Rhode Island's planning and development community. Included were members of the Technical Committee and State Planning Council, community planning directors, representatives of state agencies, and the leadership of not-for-profit organizations. Statewide Planning's Land Use staff conducted the

interviews, which usually involved an organization's supervisors and technical staff. The objective of the interviews was to gather information, expertise, and a wide range of perceptions about current land use conditions and on Rhode Island's land use system. At each interview, staff asked, "From your vantage point, what would you like to see in five years? What would you like to see in ten years?"

Several general themes arose in the interviews. First was the sense of urgency that unfortunate land use changes are occurring in the state, and at a newly accelerated rate. Second was great dismay at the impact of current land use trends. One person commented, "Parts no longer look like Rhode Island... sprawl is overwhelming the historic landscape." Also there was concern with the social impacts of current development patterns. One planner said, "It's very important that diversity is not happening in the suburbs."

The third theme was the need for Rhode Island planning to be smart, practical, and efficient. Many planners spoke of the need to address the zoning, to connect our goals and policies "to the ground," and to use current technology such as GIS mapping.

Finally, many state and local planners spoke about stress on the professionals and their departments. They commented on how complicated the land use field has become and how much their staffs are strained administering current regulations.

In spite of the current planning challenges, all of the persons interviewed agreed that a strong state Land Use Plan, "a real guide plan," could be a major positive development.

Land Use 2025 Brainstorming Session (2003)

On November 20, 2003, more than sixty planners assembled for a day-long brainstorming session on the new State Land Use Plan. They included members of the State Planning Council and Technical Committee and community planners. They discussed existing conditions and Statewide Planning's findings from research and public outreach, including the recent interviews. The session affirmed these findings and endorsed a three-part organizational framework for *Land Use 2025*. As suggested by Land Use staff, this framework would be based on issues of greenspace, community design, and infrastructure.

2-2 Deriving a Land Use Vision for Rhode Island

Emerging Land Use Visions

This plan begins with the premise that certain commonly held beliefs underlie public policy in land use. We assume that, while they may differ in how they express them, Rhode Islanders to a great degree share the following opinions:

- Rhode Island's land is a finite resource that must be efficiently employed to support strong communities built upon the state's social, economic, and environmental diversity.
- We must maintain and enhance our high quality of life, and sustain a successful economy that provides opportunities for all.
- No single purpose, sector, or entity can shape a successful land use future alone. It must be created by an alliance of governments, business and the public working in concert toward shared goals.

Beyond these basic concepts, land use professionals have developed detailed technical and strategic policies that are also fundamental to *Land Use 2025*. These would shape future land use in Rhode Island to achieve vibrant community centers and neighborhoods, a pervasive greenspace network, revitalized urban centers, the containment of sprawl, quality design in development, and effective stewardship of all resources.

Several state documents have articulated visions for land use in Rhode Island, extolled the values of certain resources, or offered descriptions of what we would like the state to be. For example, State Guide Plan Element 155, *A Greener Path: Greenspace and Greenways for Rhode Island's Future* established a greenspace vision in 1994. ((SPP, Greener)) This system of greenspace was also described in State Guide Plan 152, *Ocean State Outdoors: Rhode Island's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan* in 2003:

A statewide system of connecting greenspaces and greenways, a network made up of critical natural and cultural resources, outdoor recreation facilities, public space, community and urban forests, public and private open spaces.

The greenspace system is to be Rhode Island's permanent green framework within which the state's communities will design and build in the 21st century. ((SPP, Ocean State Outdoors:page no.))

Growth centers are in vogue. Concentrating land uses in well-designed community centers is not only a tenet of good planning, but was a basic recommendation of both the 1975 and 1989 State Land Use Plans. More recently, the Governor's Growth Planning Council launched an initiative to promote growth centers by coordinating state and local efforts in priority areas. Growth centers have a core of commercial and community services, residential development, and natural and built landmarks and boundaries that provide a sense of place. ((Governor's Growth Planning Council, 2002))

In addition, the recognition of *special places* is a compelling, emerging theme in land use discussions. The power of people's emotional response to beautiful places,

both built and natural, has great potential for promoting land use practices that balance preservation and public access.

Appreciation of place goes beyond beauty. Many Rhode Islanders have strong emotional connections to special places in our state that have been important parts of their lives.

The importance of “the power of place” – the relationship between quality of place and quality of life – and the importance of successful land use strategies to preserve them are increasingly recognized as strategic tools for economic well-being. The R.I. Economic Policy Council and others have extolled the potential of the state’s “rich mix of authentic places” to attract or retain the young and the talented, people who can contribute much to the economy if they settle here. ((RIEPC:1))

The Broad Land Use Pattern Suggests an “Inside/Outside” Systems Approach

When examined on the *broadest* scale, for example from a map of the state, a striking characteristic of Rhode Island’s land use pattern is that it retains a strong distinction between the historic urban centers and more rural surrounding areas. Settlement around waterfront and manufacturing centers remains the dominant feature of the state’s landscape, despite the decline in manufacturing, the disinvestments in urban areas, and the suburban sprawl characterizing the last 50 years.

Rhode Island population distribution, the existing residential density, provides an interesting contrast and a valuable asset as we plan for land use. The state’s population density of 1,003 persons and 420 housing units per square mile is one of the highest in the country, yet Rhode Island ranks very highly among the states in percentage of land that is forested. ((Reference?)) The explanation for this apparent inconsistency is that most of the population resides in the center of the state in a highly populated, relatively narrow, urban/suburban corridor right up to the shores of Narragansett Bay and the valleys of the Blackstone and Pawtuxet Rivers.

This corridor is about 20 miles wide and 40 miles long. It contains not only much of the residential population, but also nearly all of the public infrastructure, the major transportation routes, and institutional and cultural centers. This corridor contains most of the building stock of the state, and certainly most of the historic structures.

After centuries of settlement, the areas that first attracted humans – the Bay waterfront and major river valleys – continue to be attractive for intensive human settlement and a multiplicity of land uses. Beyond the dense core on either side, patterns of development are decidedly lower intensity.

It has been suggested that these two distinctly different development patterns call for the state to pursue two significantly different but compatible land use strategies. This is called an *inside/outside* approach, and can be summed up as follows:

“Inside” approach: In the urban residential corridor, we need a strategy that recognizes and supports a more intensive land use. Land use policies should focus on initiatives for preserving neighborhoods and communities, mass transit, pedestrian environments, affordable housing, compact development, public infrastructure, and urban design.

“Outside” approach: In the more rural areas of the state, and along the forested corridors, south shore beaches, salt ponds, and the Bay islands, we need a strategy that acknowledges and accommodates a level of residential and recreational land use consistent with preserving the natural resources and retaining the open space character of these areas. We should avoid sprawl and advocate clustering development, natural resource protection, fragile area overlays, on-site septic systems and wells, and greenway connections.

Rhode Island land use patterns are complex and diverse even within these two general urban/rural density patterns. Maps of present land use and population density by Census block illustrate intricate mixtures of concentration and greenspace in both the mostly urban and mostly rural areas. We want to preserve and encourage this complexity within Rhode Island’s landscape because they form our “authentic places.” We also want to preserve and encourage the distinction between the mostly urban and mostly rural parts of Rhode Island.

We can use a *land use systems approach* to improve the overall land use pattern and its individual components:

- The network of *greenspace* can be used to shape the built centers.
- The *built centers* can maximize the good building sites by having well designed, compact, dense construction.
- The *infrastructure* systems provide the basic skeleton – the support and connections, the roads and the public utilities that make the concentrated community centers possible.

A Constellation of Centers and Corridors

Rhode Island is often described as a city-state, with Providence and the surrounding communities at the head of the Bay as its large, central core. This notion poses Greater Providence as the major center for the state, the core of a “Rhode Island region” that also encompasses parts of southeastern Massachusetts, and to a lesser extent eastern Connecticut.

It may be more useful to imagine Rhode Island as a constellation of community centers. ((Calthorpe:6)) This would recognize the dominance of Greater Providence as a traditional center, but also allow for the emergence of new centers. Each of the communities would also be seen as a constellation of districts, neighborhoods and special places, set against a greenspace background.

The constellation image thus captures the statewide network of centers of various sizes – state, regional, city, town and village – and allows for districts of special character or special features. The centers are connected by infrastructure corridors framed by an extensive greenspace network, including all municipalities at one level and the small and large centers within them (community-level constellations) at another. This construct nicely builds on the many existing historic neighborhoods, mill complexes and beach communities located throughout the more rural areas of Rhode Island, and makes potential development areas easier to identify by virtue of their role as centers.

The constellation approach accounts for greenspace, special places, growth centers, and transportation corridors, all essential elements in land use planning and the future land use vision.

2-3 Long Range Land Use Goals

There are five overarching goals to meet to realize the *Land Use 2025* vision articulated on page 2-1. The first describes the mission, the reason we plan; the next cover the three components of land use – greenspace, community design, and infrastructure; and the last addresses implementation and maintenance. These goals are:

1. *Relate state land use policies to projected population growth* in a manner that supports distinct quality of place in our urban and rural centers, and conserves natural resources while supporting sustainable economic activity.

2. *Build the Greenspace and Greenways Network.* Create a statewide network of greenspaces and greenways that will protect the environment, conserve natural resources, preserve scenic landscapes, provide recreation, and control and shape urban growth.

3. *Attain excellence in community design.* Promote Rhode Island communities that consist of high quality, energy-efficient, safe, and aesthetically pleasing structures. City and town centers and neighborhoods should be sensitive to the identity and special character of local places, provide economic opportunities, and preserve and enhance historic and cultural resources while maintaining a healthful, efficient, and aesthetically pleasing environment.

4. *Develop first class supporting infrastructure.* Maximize public investment in existing capacity and enhance the distinction between urban and rural development while protecting the public's health, safety, and welfare, promoting economic well-being, and preserving and enhancing environmental quality.

5. *Implement and maintain the vision.* Continue to support public stewardship for land use through strategic public investments in growth centers, land conservation, development, and enhanced planning capacity at the local and regional levels.

2-4 Policies Toward Attaining Our Land Use Goals

The policies outlined here are intended to guide public investment toward fulfillment of their respective goals. As in other elements of the State Guide Plan, these policies provide a foundation for action that encompasses related social, physical and environmental factors to be considered in making those investments. ((SPP, EDP&P:3.1))

1. Relate state land use policies to projected population growth.

- Control urban sprawl and scatteration.
- Use open space to control and shape urban growth.
- Achieve a livable, coherent, and visually pleasing environment.
- Relate the use of land to its natural characteristics and varying suitability for development.
- Relate the use of land to the level of public facilities and services available, or planned to be available.
- Promote the establishment of higher residential densities and smaller lot frontages in urban and suburban areas, and town centers, where public water and sewer service is present or planned.
- Promote low overall densities where public services are unavailable and are not planned.
- Promote the clustering of development in these areas.
- Guide development in a manner that will prevent encroachment on floodways, dunes, barrier beaches, coastal and freshwater wetlands, and other natural features that provide protection from storms, flooding, and sea-level rise.

2. Build the Greenspace and Greenways Network.

- Encourage development patterns that protect water and other natural resources.
- Factor into decisions regarding development the importance of recreation, open space, historic resources, and public access to the shore to the state's economy, in tourism, and in maintaining our quality of life.

- Design open space systems and corridors to protect complete ecologic units and provide structure and character to the built environment.
- Protect and enhance those values of the coastal region, including scenic values, that contribute to the state's quality of life. Examine proposals for changes in the coastal region in terms of their importance to the state as a whole.
- Preserve and enhance wildlife, fish, and plant species diversity and stability through habitat protection, restoration, enhancement, and prevention or mitigation of adverse impacts due to human activities. Protect rare and unique geologic or other natural features.
- Preserve the best farmland in the state for active agricultural use.

3. *Attain excellence in community design.*

- Develop residential, commercial and mixed-use areas that are compactly grouped, attractive, and compatible with the ability of land and water resources and level of public facilities and services available to support the development.
- Develop and promote innovative and sustainable land development techniques and apply available technology to make decent housing affordable for low- and moderate-income households.
- Provide a variety of housing options in proximity to major employment generators to meet the needs of the labor force.
- Preserve and enhance the distinctiveness of urban, suburban, village, and rural communities and landscapes.
- Preserve historic buildings, districts, and archeological sites.
- Relate the location of residential developments and neighborhoods to employment and commercial centers, community facilities and services, and mass transit corridors.
- Relate industrial and commercial development to overall land use by promoting the use of development controls and performance standards that mitigate conflicts with other land uses and activities.
- Stimulate the expansion of economic development activities, including cultural, educational and research centers, in the central business districts of Rhode Island's municipalities.

4. *Develop first class supporting infrastructure.*

- Protect and provide utility services that are adequate to meet the needs of present and future populations.
- Conserve and enhance desirable existing industrial areas, regional shopping areas, office complexes, and concentrations of service activities to maximize the investment and utilization of existing infrastructure.
- Locate public water and sewer facilities so as to shape development in accordance with state land use policies, rather than simply to accommodate growth.
- Plan new or expanded public sewer and water services, highway improvements, and mass transit service, for industrial and commercial development where such development is appropriate in terms of natural constraints of the land, air, and water, and where the area is being developed at an intensity that is consistent with state land use policy and will not promote wasteful use of resources.
- Locate development causing other than domestic waste discharges in areas served or planned for service by public sewer systems, or where appropriate waste treatment and disposal is provided and maintained in an effective, environmentally-sound manner.
- Promote state and local development programs and activities that encourage new growth in locations and at densities that will achieve appropriate utilization of existing water supply sources.
- Develop and maintain a balanced, integrated, safe, secure, and cost-efficient transportation system, locating residential, industrial, commercial and institutional development within transportation corridors. Relate the design and location of transportation facilities positively to the natural and cultural landscape.
- Provide a high aesthetic quality in the transportation system.
- Maintain the functional integrity of existing and planned roadways through appropriate land use controls and design standards in order to alleviate congestion, promote safety, and reduce the need for new highways.
- Promote concentrations of high-density housing and employment near mass transit routes and terminals, and take other actions to support transit-oriented development and to lessen dependence on the automobile.

- Develop land in the immediate vicinity of airports in a manner that will be compatible with airport operations. Seek to minimize adverse impacts, if any, to pre-existing land uses.
- Encourage development patterns that promote energy efficiency and help attain state air quality objectives.
- Promote land use development that contributes to energy conservation and increased reliance on renewable energy resources, while assuring dependable sources of fuel supplies to meet long-term energy needs.
- Recognize the varying demands for energy associated with different land use patterns, and encourage patterns that tend to reduce the need for energy.

5. *Implement and maintain the vision.*

- Promote the designation of growth centers at appropriate locations and of appropriate design to achieve a concentrated development pattern in accordance with the vision of *Land Use 2025*.
- Support property tax reform efforts that will reduce the negative influences of the current system on land use decision-making.
- Continue implementation and enhancement of the State Guide Plan/local Comprehensive Plan system as a coordinated and consistent framework for attaining state and local goals for land use and development.
- Maintain and enhance the capacities of state, regional and local land use planning and management functions in support of the land use vision and goals of *Land Use 2025*.
- Support multi-community regional and watershed-wide planning to coordinate policy development and promote cooperative implementation of plans, programs and projects affecting more than one community.
- Ensure that state-of-the art tools and practices are available to the state's planning professionals, and that planning and management systems are adequately-resourced relative to their mandated missions.
- Strengthen the planning database through continued support for development, maintenance and utilization of a statewide, coordinated geographic information system.

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- Develop effective and efficient training programs on an ongoing basis for those involved in local land use planning and decision-making.